

NORTHWEST SPECIAL EDUCATION REGION

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LAC)

(Serving Foster, Foster/Glocester, Glocester and Scituate School Districts)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Ponaganset Middle School

Attendees: Denise Brierley, Assistant Special Education Director, Heather Kennedy, LAC Co-Chairperson, Joseph Porrazzo, Ponaganset Middle School Building Administrator, Joseph Maggiacomo, parent, and Colleen Brophy Co-Chairperson.

Technology:

Explained the purpose of this meeting was to respond to parents' questions regarding technology use.

Joe Porrazzo explained that he is not a technology geek and does advocate for personal interaction. Everything should not be done in technology. How do we incorporate technology into our classrooms?

There were discussions regarding the use of technology prior to

one-to-one implementation (at the region). The special educators have been involved in technology use before the movement.

Use of the Chromebook is for "enhancement" or personalization. We are better servicing all students as the special educators have been using a lot of this technology historically.

Heather now sits on the RISEAC. They have interest in developing consistency in technology use across the state.

Heather mentioned the stress involved in increased use of technology for both students and parents. Can students with disabilities have access to paper copies of text or materials? Joe Porrazzo notes that PMS has sent the message to teachers and parents that materials can be printed. Do parents know? How are we preparing our elementary students?

Joe Porrazzo mentioned that each year we learn and next year the plan is to do a 6th grade boot camp (learning how to open locker?, how do I move around the building?, how do I follow my schedule?). This year the school hosted a pick-up night and a roll-out night but there was limited attendance. Next year, there will be a "teaching session" on the same night as the pick-up.

What is plan for devices/BYOD in the Scituate schools?

„« Discussed community access to WiFi.

„« Discussed the option to use technology or paper depending on the best methods for individual students. The stress is on all teachers and students to make this change. Heather voiced a concern that it is hard to learn the use of technology for learning when students are learning technology. Are they losing academically?

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„« Discussed some of the challenges of the technology. Parents sometimes can't "fix it". It is sometimes the way that the teachers set it up so that students get personalization. Students work and master at their own pace and teachers control their movement through the curriculum based on their performance.

„« Discussed grading and how it is only "representative" at any given time.

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time.

„« Need to empower parents to have the discussion at the IEP meeting regarding appropriate accom-modations in curriculum.

Mr. Maggiacomo asked about the "dyslexic font". Heather mentioned the organization "Decoding Dyslexia RI" as a resource. Mr. Porrazzo talked about "Google Read to Write" and its use in schools.

Heather mentioned the difficulty that having access to video/video games has on some students independent work completion. There are some blocks but they change. Mr. Porrazzo encourages parents to shut the device if it becomes a problem. Students are also encouraged to print if it is a distraction. Parents have concerns about internet use. Should there be a protocol regarding internet safety? It is discussed and will be presented at the parent distribution of the device in the future.

Teachers are using the Learning Management System (Canvas) differently.

At PHS, students will transition to laptops and Microsoft because of the real world application. Google for education will still be available. Students often have the easiest transition to new technology.

Students at the region also have access to after school nights with

teachers. Colleen mentioned that it has helped because school is the place where she does work and there are people to help.

Future Date/Topics:

February 10, 2016 ~ Understanding the why and how of special education assessments and measurements.... speaker? location? Why do we benchmark? Denise will talk to elementary school psychologist to see if she is available for this meeting.

May 11, 2015 ~ The State's 5 year plan ~ what that means for special education families as it relates to social emotional learning? graduation pathway? positive language and outlook on the idea of "individualized" plans. Heather and Colleen will identify a speaker.

LAC meeting ended at 7:15 p.m.